

Overview of Native Network Skills Exchange Workshop Proposal and Input at 2009 Workshop

Participants of the 2009 Native Network Skills Exchange Workshop (SEW) provided feedback on the SEW proposal prepared by Native Network members on the Skills Exchange Work Group. The goals of the discussion were to:

1. Clarify the role of Skills Exchange Workshops (SEWs) in the larger context of the Native Network (NN) and design a system of member support for its ongoing success.
2. Refine a proposal for future SEWs, to include:
 - Overall Purpose of the SEW
 - Values to be manifested through the SEW
 - Target participants
 - Outcomes/ Deliverables/Impact
 - Funding Process/ Financial Support Strategies for Sustainability
 - Member Leadership and Tasks
 - Routines & Rituals to Build our Shared Culture
 - Coordination with other Network work groups to advance initiatives
3. Learn and practice culturally resonant processes, approaches, skills and strategies that can be incorporated or adapted for use in individuals' practices.
4. Gather individual, small group and whole group feedback on the proposal and the suggested improvements discussed at the 2009 SEW
5. Agree on next steps such re: refinement of SEW proposal, planning for 2010 and beyond.

The SEW participants reviewed the SEW proposed purpose and values in plenary session and shared how they felt about them as well as what new ideas the purpose and values sparked in their minds. Participant responses are reflected in the edited proposal. Comments offered as invited feedback appear in **blue bold font for readability** and will be used in planning future SEW's.

- Target participants
- Outcomes/ Deliverable/ Impact
- Funding Process/ Financial Support Strategies for Sustainability
- Member Leadership Needed to Support Skills Exchange Workshops
- SEW Routines & Rituals to Build Our Shared Culture
- Coordinate w/ Other NN Work Groups to Advance Initiatives

NEXT STEPS:

The SEW work group invites your feedback on the revised proposal, particularly:

1. How do the proposed PURPOSE and VALUES of the SEW support the mission and vision of the Network?
2. Do the proposed PURPOSE and VALUES of the SEW meet *your* interests as a member of the NN?
3. Do the details, the elements suggested for each SEW seem achievable and appropriate?
4. What recommendations would you make to strengthen this proposal for regular NN SEWs?

The U.S. Institute and current SEW work group will incorporate Network member input for use in developing and planning future skills exchange workshops. **Please provide your input to: Sasha Stortz (stortz@ecr.gov) by December 14th, 2009**

Rather than hosting a SEW in 2010, the NN will gather on May 25, 2010 at the US Institute's National ECR conference. The focus of the May gathering is: 1) orient new members to the Native Network and 2) communicate and update re work group efforts and continue discussions such as the SEW values as outlined in this document. We also are working to see that the Network's interests are addressed in conference sessions. We are considering holding the SEW every 2 years, with the 2011 SEW held on the West Coast. Future SEW's will seek to rotate locations; East, West, South West, Alaska, and Hawaii.

Overall Purpose of the Native Network's Skills Exchange Workshop

- Support professional growth of Native and Non-Native dispute resolution practitioners so that they may more effectively guide environmental collaboration and conflict resolution efforts, particularly those that involve both Native and Non-Native peoples;
- Advance innovation in practice to improve impact and sustainable success of third-party efforts in environmental disputes;
- Disseminate what we learn; contribute to the larger field; and seek to impact the contexts in which we work – through print, the web and professional presentations;
- Bind and bond members to each other by creating a nurturing culture and climate within the Native Network;
- Talk with and learn from those we serve (e.g., agency personnel, tribal members, researchers, private interests); and
- Increase exposure of the Native Network and its members to those with potential need for environmental dispute resolution and facilitation services.

2009 SEW Participant reactions to the stated workshop purposes:

- **Feel good about it**
- **On point, wouldn't change a thing**
- **Having it makes me feel confident and calm about planning the next one without having to start all over**
- **Nervous, though. How many hours a day will we have to work?**
- **Feel fine. Questions the balance between disseminating information and binding/bonding**
- **Well-stated...feel excited**
- **Great objectives**
- **Overall feeling: really good.**
- **Curious about application**
- **How can we translate this into action?**
- **Excitement about translating this into action**

Values to Practice throughout the Skills Exchange

In defining the culture of the Native Network, it is recommended that we choose values and collectively commit to manifesting these values through our actions. Here are some Hawai'ian concepts that could be used as guides, augmented with Native American and Alaska Native values. The goal to find a set of values that speak to our collective aspirations for the SEW and the Network and that can guide our actions and decisions.

Kulia i ka nu`u – Strive for excellence.
Imi `ike (seek knowledge) – Seek knowledge for life.
Hana mamuli o ka `olelo – Actions speak louder than words.
Pono (righteousness) – Be righteous. Balanced. Seek justice.
Kokua (help) – Help, support, give back.
Ho`ike (show) – Pass on knowledge.
Ha`aha`a (humble) – Be receptive.
Malama ke kino (health) – Keep the mind and body well.
Imua (perseverance) – Go forward, don't give up.

2009 SEW Participant Ideas About the Values:

- **We like the idea of having a set of values for the SEW**

- These are good values and can be used as a starting point, but this is a conversation and process WE should all have; deep discussion of this matters to who we are and what we become.
- Consider “culture” broadly when choosing; we represent many cultures, including ethnic, racial, professional, gender, etc.
- We need to run these things by tribal groups and see what they have to say...how can their background and values influence the proposal?
- Starting point in Skills’ binder activity
- Values are the heart of what we do
- Your values: that’s what we want to hear from this group
- Values extending beyond our own...professional values, other cultures
- Translate English words into Native translations
- A value statement to also include:
“O son of spirit, my first counsel in this process a pure, kindly and radiant heart, for thine is a sovereignty, ancient, imperishable and everlasting.”
- Maybe there are broader values we can add: integrity, the absolute truth (truth as you know it to be between yourself and the creator), being respectful of people’s beliefs
- It’s critical to get the values step right. It will come to inform everything you do...make sure you take enough time to get it right

Target Participants. Strive for approximately 50 participants per year, with NN participation subsidized. **Emphasize quality of participants, people with a voice over numbers of people.**

- 30-40 Native Network Members. Have a balanced representation of Native and Non-Native Network members. Q: What is the right combination of Network members -- practitioners, partners and coordination team members -- to ensure a safe space and meaningful dialogue that benefits the broad array of Network members?
 - **Balance means everyone has a voice, make sure they bring something to the table**
 - **But want to keep it unbalanced in the sense that we want practitioners to dominate, want to keep that culture present**
- Invited Guests (Extended Family)
 - *5-6 NN Recruits or Mentees. Invited individuals being mentored as practitioner members within/among the Network and/or recruited to join the Network. These individuals should reflect Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian recruits.
 - *3-4 Invited Clients, Conveners or Process Participants. Invited guests chosen to strategically create relationships, educate our clients and enhance our understanding of those we serve.
 - **Other Participants: Workshop funders, members of proposed wisdom council, youth**

These groups will need an orientation to the values of the NN and the kind of work done by NN members before they participate in an SEW. This will create safety for NN members and guests.

Comments related to format of workshops given consideration of group dynamics:

- **Create safe space for meaningful dialogue- need to discuss what “safe space and meaningful dialogue” look like**
- **Could there be a few days where members meet on their own, and then involve guests or “extended family”?**

Outcome, Deliverables and Impact

Audiences for deliverables: **SEW participants, NN members not at workshop, NN practitioners, tribal communities, corporate interests, peacemaking community/judges, youth, funders**

- Written record of the proceedings posted on the Native Network member website.
- Testimonials by participants for use in recruitment and fund raising efforts.
- Resource Library posted and featured on the Native Network website and linked to other sites of potential interest to other practitioners.
- Publications on topical issues published in places that will reach a several special audiences, including:
 - Federal and state agencies;
 - Communities of Natives and Native organizations providing peacemaking and alternative dispute resolution services;
 - Private interests involved in Environmental Disputes/Projects; and
 - Practitioners working in environment and public policy resolution and/or with Native People.
 - **Press releases to general audiences re: NN activities: reporting participants, topics addressed, guest speakers, emphasizing skill building to bridge cultures**

The post-event visibility that comes from posting, publishing and promoting the Native Network and the outcomes of the SEW sessions is essential to fundraising and deepening institutional support for the Native Network. If we optimize the visibility of the Native Network and the Skills Exchange, and increase the utility of this work, not just for ourselves but others, our ability to attract and retain funders will increase.

Funding/ Support Strategies

Diversified, sustainable and representative of those we serve.

- **75-85%** Private or Philanthropic Support - (**i.e., JAMS, AAA, Indian law firms that mediate**)
 - **Cons of private or philanthropic support: paperwork, applications, proposals, reporting; private funders may expect a return on investment, plus they may expect to gain skills**
- **15-25%** USIECR Support (direct and indirect) –**New hire may improve support available to NN.**
- **___%** Other Federal Agency Support - (**Such as: BIA, MMS, FS, BLM, DOI at secretary level**)
- **___%** Practitioner Support - **Network members could identify potential funders, keep practitioner support voluntary**
- **___%** State/local government

2009 SEW Participant suggestions to address funder expectations of participating:

- **Help facilitate a better understanding of intergovernmental and intercultural DR, may need to cap number of participants**
- **Offer a free hour of consultation to funders (i.e., process design, cultural advising, conflict coaching)**
- **Outreach opportunities for NN & funders**

Leadership to Support Skills Exchange Workshops

The concept is one of shared leadership, with Native Network members and USIECR Staff (Native American and Alaska Native Program) working together to make each SEW a success. It is recommended that a SEW working group take responsibility for the following:

- Program Content and Design
- Funding

- SEW Logistics and Participant Support – (USIECR led)
- Publishing SEW Output (NN Member led) (Not compensated)

Each of the above can be NN member led; Each of the above can be its own special teams within the Skills Exchange work group

It is recommended that cost of participation in the SEW be covered or substantially subsidized for those working group members able to attend.

- **We need to decide who will lead us for 2010/2011**
- **Federal agencies will help with staff time to do admin work related to the SEW**
- **Once location is known, NN members nearest location will take responsibilities to contact local resources.**

SEW Routines & Rituals to Build our Shared Culture

- Inclusive opening and closing ceremony respectful of Native ways **while at the same time welcoming of non-Native participants values, thoughts and ideas**
 - **Allow local Native groups to participate, invite people to come and share wherever we are**
 - **Honor the houses we are in**
 - **How can we value the various cultures/rituals without disrespecting any or leaving any out or hybridizing them in ways that feel disrespectful?**
 - **Always ask permission**
 - **Focus on rituals of the place where you are**
 - **“I’m still waiting for the day when a non-Native does the opening prayer”**
 - **Do we need to be so afraid of hybrids? Hybrids or invented or created routines or rituals do not need to offend or appropriate cultural way. Recognizing the importance of various cultures - all cultures to a process, and being inclusive and inviting is the goal.**
 - **One idea - bring water from everywhere we come from, put it in a shared vessel, and then have everyone take a portion of water back at the end of the workshop; maybe we want at least one recurring ritual that is the NN SEW ritual, OURS.**
- Content Sessions (Thoughtfully designed and facilitated)
 - Pre-determined based upon common interest or shared need, expert-led
 - **Would love to see segment on peacemaking from a Native perspective, not just a focus on case law.**
 - Update on Federal and Tribal law impacting our work (USIECR)
- Place-based Case Study or Cultural Event (Reflection, analysis and lessons to be learned, featuring the people and land where the SEW is held)
 - **Have a field trip, cultural event or visit to site of a conflict; ask people from the case to engage in discussion of the case. Highlight case that went through peacemaking process where possible. Consider scheduling SEW to coincide with cultural events. Consider letting culture drive timing and location of event.**
- Open Space Sessions - Spontaneously defined, participant-led sessions
 - **This is a good feature. Not good for the whole Skills Exchange, but for a portion of our time. Would be nice to complete the process of seeing convergence across the topics and a clearer plan to act on these ideas.**
- Native Network Members Meeting (Working Groups Report; Institute offers Update; Members Input)

- Important to include, keep simple, have information as read-aheads, make business and education distinct on the workshop agenda, limit business to compelling topics.
- Place for gratitude and for raising issues of importance to the Institute and the Members
- –Members’ meeting is both business and education. (Not tacit permission to pick and choose when to come. If you attend the SEW as a NN member, you are expected to attend the Members’ Meeting)
- Time to form and nurture Practitioner Triads that allow members to partner for mutual development and sustained engagement, over time. (Coordinate with Membership Group). Topics discussed in Open Space sessions make great content to address through Practitioner Triads.

Feedback about the 2009 Skills Workshop:

- Liked...
 - Input invited
 - Native, non-Native voices
 - USIECR Director present
 - USIECR participates
 - Agency participation
 - Opportunities to take leadership in planning and in workshop (e.g. Open Space)
- Changes/reflections...
 - What about a two-day pre-conference event that members would share?
 - Look at pre-conference collaboration – youth/cross training
 - Build in visits to local communities and/or situation where there is sought or has been reconciliation and/or in the heart of the land, add the “reception,” keynote to that
 - Add values clarification discussions
 - Dialogue around values and identity
 - Should work on program content and design (Network-led)
 - When we know where we’re going to go, and if we have members who know people there or are from there, they should be the point people for organizing the opening and closing
 - Look for/to agency people to share/carry weight
 - 501c3 to start helping other in participation
 - What about the four proposed work groups??
 - Should we have a fifth group related to social marketing?